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THE DEPUTY CLERK: Counsel, state your name for the record.

MR. QUIGLEY: Good morning, your Honor. Brendan
Quigley for the United States, joined by Special Agent Mike
Savona of the FBI.

THE COURT: Good morning.

MR. MIEDEL: Good morning. Frank Miedel for

Mr. Simmons.

THE COURT: Good morning, Mr. Miedel.

Good morning, Mr. Simmons.

THE DEFENDANT: Good morning.

THE COURT: I understand we are here for a change of plea.

Mr. Miedel, I understand Mr. Simmons, having previously pleaded not guilty, is now prepared to plead guilty to Count One of the superseding indictment. Is that correct?

MR. MIEDEL: That is correct.

THE COURT: Mr. Simmons, I'm Magistrate Judge Moses.

I have before me a document entitled Consent to Proceed Before
a United States Magistrate Judge on a Felony Plea Allocution.
This appears to be your signature down at the bottom.

Did you sign that form?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: What this form says is that you know you

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have the right to have your plea taken by a United States district judge, but you're agreeing to have your plea taken by a magistrate judge, which is what I am.

As a magistrate judge, I have the authority to take your plea with your consent. You are entitled to all the same rights and protections as if you were before a district judge, and if you are found guilty, you'll be sentenced by a district judge.

So, before you signed the consent form, did your attorney explain that to you?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: Do you wish to proceed with your plea in my courtroom today?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: Very well. I will accept your consent.

As I discussed with your attorney, sir, I have been informed that you wish to change your plea and enter a plea of guilty as to the charges alleged against you in Count One of the superseding indictment.

Is that correct?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: Now, before deciding whether to accept your guilty plea, I need to ask you certain questions. It's important that you answer my questions honestly and completely.

The purpose of these proceedings is to make sure that

THE DEFENDANT: I'm sorry?

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22 THE COURT: In the last 24 hours, have you taken any 2.3 drugs, medicine, or pills that affect your mental processes,

whether or not prescribed by a doctor?

THE DEFENDANT: No, ma'am.

about the charges and about how you wish to proceed?

innocent.

The government would be required to prove you guilty beyond a reasonable doubt before you could be found guilty. You could not be convicted unless a jury of 12 people agreed

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unanimously that you are guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Do you understand that?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: If you went to trial, then at that trial and at every stage of the case, you would have the right to be represented by an attorney. If you could not afford one, an attorney would be appointed to represent you at the government's expense.

Even if you retained private defense counsel but then ran out of money, an attorney would be appointed to continue to represent you. You would be entitled to an attorney all the way through trial, not just for a guilty plea. So your decision to plead guilty should not depend on whether you can afford a lawyer.

Do you understand that?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: During trial, the witnesses for the prosecution would have to come to court and testify in your presence where you could see them and hear them and your lawyer could cross-examine them.

If you wanted, your lawyer could offer evidence on your behalf as well. You would be able to use the Court's power, known as subpoena power, to compel witnesses to come to court to testify even if they didn't want to come.

Do you understand that? Mr. Simmons?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.

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THE COURT: If you were convicted at trial, you would have the right to appeal that verdict to a higher court.

Do you understand that?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: As I said before, you have the right to plead not guilty. Even today, although you came to court for the purpose of entering a guilty plea, you have the right to change your mind, persist in your not guilty plea, and to proceed to trial.

But if you do plead guilty and if the Court accepts your plea, you will give up the right to a trial and the rights that go with it that I just described to you. If you plead guilty, there won't be any trial. All that will remain to be done will be to impose a sentence.

Now, you and the government will be allowed to make certain arguments about what sentence you should get, but there won't be any trial to determine whether you are guilty or not guilty of the charges to which you plead guilty.

Do you understand that?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: Do you also understand that the decision as to the appropriate sentence in your case would be entirely up the to sentencing judge, not me, not the prosecutor, not your lawyer, and that the sentencing judge will be limited only

by what the law requires?

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2 THE DEFENDANT: I do.

THE COURT: That means that even if you are surprised or disappointed by your sentence, you will still be bound by your guilty plea, and you won't be able to take it back.

Do you understand that?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: If you do plead guilty, you're also giving up your right not to incriminate yourself, I'll ask you questions about what you did in order to satisfy myself that you're actually guilty, and you'll have to answer those questions truthfully.

So, by pleading guilty, you will be admitting what lawyers call your factual guilt as well as your legal guilt.

Do you understand that?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: Count One of the superseding indictment charges you with conspiring to commit securities fraud and wire fraud in violation of Title 18 of the U.S. Code, Section 371.

I'm going to ask the assistant U.S. Attorney, Mr. Quigley, to state the elements of the charge.

The elements, sir, are the things the government would have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt if you went to trial.

Mr. Quigley.

MR. QUIGLEY: Thank you, your Honor.

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With respect to the conspiracy charge, the government would have to prove four elements:

First, that two or more persons entered the unlawful agreement charged in the indictment; second, that the defendant knowingly and willfully became a member of the conspiracy; third, that at least one of the members of the conspiracy knowingly committed an overt act charged in the indictment; and fourth, that the overt act was committed to further some objective of the conspiracy.

With respect to the underlying offenses that are the object of the conspiracy, securities fraud and wire fraud, with respect to securities fraud, the government would have to prove that in connection with the purchase or sale of a security, the defendant or one of his coconspirators employed a device, scheme, or artifice to defraud or made an untrue statement of a material fact or made a statement of immaterial fact that made what was said under the circumstances misleading, or engaged in an act, practice, or course of business that operated or would operate as a fraud or deceit upon a purchaser or seller.

Second, that the defendant acted willfully and knowingly the with intent to defraud; and third, that the defendant or one of the coconspirators used or caused to be used any means or instrument of transportation or communication in interstate commerce with use of the mails. That's securities fraud.

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With respect to wire fraud, there are three elements:

First, there was a scheme or artifice to defraud or to obtain money or property; second, that the defendant knowingly and willfully participated in this scheme or artifice to defraud, that with knowledge of its fraudulent nature and specific intent to defraud; and third, that in the execution of the scheme, the defendant or one of his coconspirators used facilities in interstate commerce, interstate wires.

THE COURT: Is there a venue element as well?

MR. QUIGLEY: Yes, your Honor. The government would have to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the overt act occurred in the Southern District of New York.

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Quigley.

Mr. Simmons, I'm now going to tell you the maximum possible penalty for the crime charged in Count One. The maximum means the most that could possibly be imposed. It does not mean that this is necessarily what you will receive, but by pleading guilty, you are exposing yourself to the possibility of receiving any punishment or combination of punishments up to the maximum that I'm about to describe.

Do you understand that?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: The maximum term of imprisonment for the crime charged in Count One is five years, five years in prison, which could be followed by up to three years of supervised

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release.

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Supervised release means that after release from prison, you would be subject to supervision by the probation department. If you are placed on supervised release and thereafter violated any condition of your supervised release, the Court could revoke the term of supervised release previously imposed and return you to prison without giving you any credit for the time previously served on post-release supervision.

In addition to these restrictions on your liberty, the maximum possible punishment for the crime charged in Count One includes financial penalties. The maximum allowable fine is \$250,000 or twice the profits of the criminal activity or twice what someone other than yourself lost because of the criminal activity, whichever is greater.

You will also be required to pay restitution to any victims of the crime in an amount that the Court decides is required to compensate them for any injuries.

In addition, by pleading guilty, you will admit to the forfeiture allegations in the indictment, and you will agree to forfeit the sum of \$6.9 million, \$6,900,000, in U.S. currency, which is deemed to be property within the scope of 18 U.S. Code, Section 981(a)(1)(C) and 28 U.S. Code, Section 2461.

I am also required by law to tell you that there is an additional special assessment of \$100 which is required to be

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imposed on each count of conviction.

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Now, you told me a moment ago that you are a U.S. citizen. Nonetheless, I am required to tell you that if you were not a U.S. citizen or if it should turn out that you are not a U.S. citizen, your guilty plea could also have adverse consequences for your ability to remain in or return to the United States, including removal, deportation, denial of citizenship, or denial of admission into the U.S. in the future.

Your removal or deportation could be mandatory. If that did happen, you would still be bound by your guilty plea. You would not be able to withdraw it regardless of any advice you received from your counsel or others regarding the immigrations consequences of your plea.

Do you understand that?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: I am told there is a written agreement between you and the government which is being handed to me now. It is dated October 2 of this year. It is addressed to your lawyer, and it appears to have your signature on the last page, which I am holding up.

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: Did you sign this plea agreement today?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: Did you read it before you signed it?

1 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am. 2 THE COURT: Good. 3 Did you discuss it with your attorney? THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am. 4 5 THE COURT: Do you understand its terms? THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am. 6 7 THE COURT: Has anyone promised you or offered you 8 anything in order to get you to plead quilty, other than what 9 is in your written plea agreement? 10 THE DEFENDANT: No, ma'am. 11 THE COURT: It appears that you and the government have reached agreement regarding the appropriate calculation of 12 13 your sentence based on a part of our law known as the 14 sentencing guidelines. 15 And it says on page 2 of your plea agreement that the 16 appropriate guideline sentencing range for you is from 37 to 46 17 months, 37 to 46 months' imprisonment, and that the appropriate 18 monetary fine range is from \$15,000 to \$150,000. 19 Under this agreement, sir, neither you nor the 20 government is allowed to argue to the sentencing judge for a 21 calculation which is different from the one in the agreement. 22 Do you understand that? 2.3 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor. 24 THE COURT: Do you also understand that in this

agreement you have also limited your right to appeal in certain

respects from any sentence that may be imposed?

Specifically, do you understand that as long as the district judge sentences you to a prison term of no longer than 46 months, any lawful sentence of supervised release, and a fine no greater than \$150,000, you are giving up your right to challenge your sentence, whether by direct appeal, writ of habeas corpus, or otherwise?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: Do you understand that under the terms of your plea agreement, even if you later learned the government withheld from your counsel certain information that would have been helpful to you in defending yourself at trial, you would not be able to complain about that or withdraw your plea?

THE DEFENDANT: May I just --

THE COURT: Take a moment.

THE DEFENDANT: Thank you.

(Pause)

THE DEFENDANT: Okay, your Honor. Thank you.

THE COURT: Do you understand what I just told you?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

THE COURT: Do you also understand that the terms of your plea agreement, including any recommendation or calculation relating to your sentence, are not binding on the sentencing judge?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor.

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THE COURT: The sentencing judge can reject those recommendations or calculations and could impose a more severe sentence than you expect without permitting you to withdraw your plea of guilty.

The sentencing judge is required to make their own independent calculation of the appropriate sentencing range under the guidelines, and she will also have the discretion to give you a sentence above or below that range. If she goes above, she can go up to the maximum sentence that I told you about earlier.

In addition to the guidelines and possible departures from the guidelines, the sentencing judge will also consider all of the factors set forth at 18 U.S. Code, Section 3553(a). In other words, she will pronounce whatever sentence she believes is the appropriate sentence for you, even if it's different from the one set forth in your plea agreement.

Do you understand that?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.

THE COURT: The Court will also consider a presentence report prepared by the probation department in advance of your sentencing. You and the government will have an opportunity ahead of sentencing to challenge the facts which are reported by the probation officer.

Do you understand there is no parole in the federal system?

18 HACUSE IM 17-cr-00127-KMW Document 94 Filed 11/07/17 Page 18 of 23 1 (Pause) 2 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor. 3 THE COURT: You understand that now. 4 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 5 THE COURT: If you are sentenced to prison, you will 6 not be released on parole. 7 Before I go on, let me ask counsel for the government 8 and defense counsel if there are any other provisions of the 9 plea agreement you'd like me to go over with Mr. Simmons. 10 MR. QUIGLEY: No, your Honor. 11 MR. MIEDEL: Your Honor, just to be clear, while the parties have stipulated to the guideline range calculation, 12 13 either party under the terms of the agreement is permitted to 14 seek a sentence outside of that range. 15 THE COURT: Under 18 U.S. Code, Section 3553(a). 16 MR. MIEDEL: Correct. 17 THE COURT: Correct. 18 Anything further? 19 MR. MIEDEL: No. 20 THE COURT: One last time, Mr. Simmons, because this

THE COURT: One last time, Mr. Simmons, because this is an important question, other than what is in the plea agreement itself, have any promises been made to influence you to plead guilty?

THE DEFENDANT: No, ma'am.

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THE COURT: Have any promises been made concerning the

actual sentence that you will receive?

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THE DEFENDANT: No, ma'am.

THE COURT: Now that you have been advised of the charges against you, the possible penalties that you face, and the rights that you are giving up, is it still your intention to plead guilty to Count One of the superseding indictment?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: Is your plea voluntary and made of your own free will?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: Mr. Simmons, with respect to Count One, how do you plead? Guilty or not guilty?

THE DEFENDANT: Guilty, your Honor.

THE COURT: Please tell me in your own words what you did that makes you guilty of the crime charged in Count One.

THE DEFENDANT: In 2016 in the Southern District of New York, I agreed with another person to commit a fraud. Specifically, I, along with another person, told investors that their money would be invested without it being commingled with other peoples' capital, which wasn't true. I made other representations that were not true.

I misused the investors' funds for personal purposes without her knowledge. Some of my conversations took place over the phone or by email. I do recognize that I failed to protect my client, and what I did was wrong.

1 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Simmons. 2 Did your attorney help you prepare the testimony that you just gave? 3 4 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. He made it a lot more clear. 5 I'm sorry. THE COURT: That's fine. 6 7 Do you adopt those words as your own? 8 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor. 9 Is everything you just told me true? THE COURT: 10 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor. 11 THE COURT: Did you know at the time you did those 12 acts that what you were doing was wrong? 13 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor. 14 THE COURT: Mr. Quigley, do you believe that is a 15 sufficient factual predicate for a guilty plea? 16 MR. QUIGLEY: Yes, your Honor. 17 THE COURT: Would you like me to ask the defendant any 18 further questions? 19 MR. QUIGLEY: No, your Honor. 20 THE COURT: Does the government represent that it has 21 sufficient evidence to establish guilt beyond a reasonable 22 doubt at trial, and would you like to make a proffer? 2.3 MR. QUIGLEY: Yes, your Honor. The government's 24 evidence would include emails between or involving the

defendant and his coconspirators and victims of the fraud;

testimonial evidence from victims of the fraud and potentially a cooperating witness; and other documentary evidence, including bank records showing the movement of funds from investors and among the defendants.

THE COURT: Thank you.

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Mr. Simmons, on the basis of your responses to my questions and my observations of your demeanor, I find that you are competent to enter a guilty plea. I am satisfied that you understand your rights, including your right to go to trial; that you are aware of the consequences of your plea, including the sentence that may be imposed; that you are voluntarily pleading guilty; and that you have admitted that you are guilty as charged in Count One of the superseding indictment. For these reasons, I will recommend that the district judge accept your plea.

I will ask the government to order a copy of the transcript and submit it to Judge Woods together with any additional paperwork so that she can act on my recommendation.

Has she set a sentencing date?

MR. QUIGLEY: She has not, your Honor. We request a control date three months out, maybe January 31.

THE COURT: The defendant is not in custody; correct?

MR. QUIGLEY: He is not.

THE COURT: Is there a reason that you need three months? We ordinarily give a six-month control date for a

defendant who is not in custody.

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2 MR. MIEDEL: Did you say six?

MR. QUIGLEY: We can just write the judge and ask for a date.

THE COURT: Whichever you want.

MR. QUIGLEY: When we ask her to accept the plea, we'll ask her to set a sentencing date.

THE COURT: We'll set a control date for January.

January 29 will be the control date.

MR. QUIGLEY: Thank you, your Honor.

THE COURT: I will direct that a presentence report be prepared.

Can you deliver the case summary, Mr. Quigley, within the next two weeks for purposes of the presentence report?

MR. QUIGLEY: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: Mr. Miedel, will you be available with your client for interview by the probation department within the next two weeks?

MR. MIEDEL: Yes.

THE COURT: Thank you.

I don't know what the bail terms are, but are there any objections to continuing them?

MR. QUIGLEY: No, your Honor.

THE COURT: So, Mr. Simmons, all of the conditions on which you are released up until now continue to apply, and as

I'm sure you understand, a violation of any of those conditions can have serious consequences, including revocation of bail or prosecution for bail jumping. Do you understand that? THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am. I do. THE COURT: Anything further from the government? MR. QUIGLEY: No, your Honor. Thank you. THE COURT: Anything further from the defense? MR. MIEDEL: No, your Honor. Thank you. THE COURT: Thank you, gentlemen. (Adjourned) 2.3